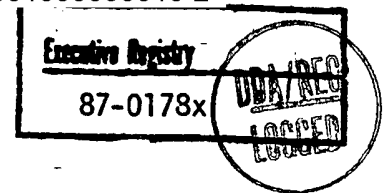


THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



January 20, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL

FROM: ALFRED H. KINGON *AK*

SUBJECT: AIDS Education

Attached is the transcript of Secretary Bowen's remarks given at the last DPC meeting on AIDS education.

We are circulating these talking points at the request of many of the members following last week's meeting.

Attachment

DDA REGISTRY
FILE: 60-7

REMARKS BY
SECRETARY BOWEN
AT
THE DOMESTIC POLICY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 13, 1987

(Except for addition of last paragraph)

AIDS is doubling every 13 months.

AIDS will soon become one of the world's most devastating major scourges.

Bubonic Plague (the black death) killed 25 to 50 million people--nearly half of the European population--between 1347 and 1350.

Small Pox killed about 400,000 Europeans a year when at its height in the 18th Century.

Influenza killed 22 million people in the 1917 - 1918 pandemic to include 1/2 million Americans with 15,000 of them dying in Massachusetts in a 4-month period. This was the same time that a typhus epidemic killed about 3 million people in Russia and eastern Poland.

Polio killed about 22,000 Americans out of 400,000 infected between 1943 and 1956.

AIDS is hard to get. It is not spread by insect bites as in the Black Death, nor by casual skin contact as with Small Pox, nor through coughs and sneezes as influenza, and unlike typhus not spread by over-crowded and unsanitary conditions and

contaminated water. Neither is AIDS spread by shaking hands, insect bites, eating food prepared by someone with AIDS or by hugging, coughing or sneezing. But that's about the only good thing one can say about AIDS even though it may have sounded as if AIDS is not that bad. It is the first sexually transmitted disease of such massive proportions. It is world wide and spreading. If a vaccine is not developed soon (and by this, I mean in the next 10 or so years), the death toll can reach into the tens of millions.

I said AIDS is hard to get--but it is becoming easier.

Two of every three cases still involve homosexuals. AIDS is rapidly closing in on drug users and heterosexuals. In another 4 years, heterosexuals will account for about 10% of the new cases.

AIDS is spread by people free of symptoms. You can't tell who's safe and who's not.

Estimates as to future spread are probably conservative.

At the end of 1986, 29,000 Americans had contracted AIDS with over 50% ending in death and the other 50% almost sure to die.

By 1991, 270,000 Americans will have contacted AIDS and 179,000 of them will have died.

CDC estimates 1.5 million Americans now carry the virus but have no symptoms. Conceivably all could develop AIDS and certainly 25 to 50% of them will.

No cure is in sight.

The incubation period for AIDS is unknown but we do know that it is long. One can spread it around, and not know it, perhaps for 10 or so years. The chilling fact then is that when one has sex, one is not only having sex with his or her partner, but with everybody your partner has had sex with for the past 10 years.

Fear, sensitivity and the emotional impact will increase because we're dealing with a method of spreading the disease which involves sex, love and reproduction.

Dr. David Baltimore, an AIDS expert and a Nobel Laureate says: "in terms of impact on society, this disease will certainly be the most important public health problem of the next decade and going into the next century." He said "It threatens to undermine countries, particularly in Africa." He says it will cause

illness and death of so many in the middle age group, so as to "reduce the number of people available to carry out the functions of the society."

He continued: "The consequences already look catastrophic. A quarter of a million people with a lethal disease is catastrophic--and that's the United States only. And that's the rock-bottom projection for 1991."

He also said: "Quarantining will help no one. Most AIDS patients are too sick to be transmitting the virus. The virus is spread largely by people who do not have AIDS but are infected with the virus and they may or may not even know it. Quarantining would be totally futile."

I feel we've been too passive in dealing with this terrible disease. Massive, impressive, believable public education is in order. It is a sensitive issue as to how far and how deep to go. We must realize that the danger of not going far enough in our educational efforts may well exceed the danger of doing what some would call too much in this serious life or death matter which is threatening to become the greatest public health crisis in our history.

The public may be more receptive to educational efforts from any reliable source than many perceive. My only source for saying that is from a story in the January 12th issue of World Report and U.S. News which says: "Not everyone appreciates the new educational efforts, but most parents seem relieved when local schools address the sensitive subject of AIDS with educational classes. Only 20 San Francisco parents out of 22,000 pulled their children out of AIDS-information classes. Denver school officials say less than 1% of parents want their children excluded. The National PTA takes the position that the matter of how explicit AIDS information should be and at what age it should be introduced is for the community to decide."